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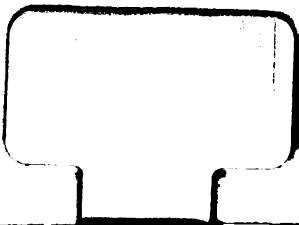
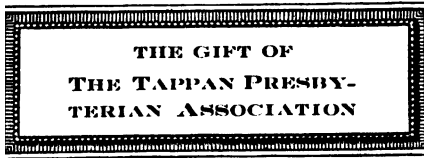
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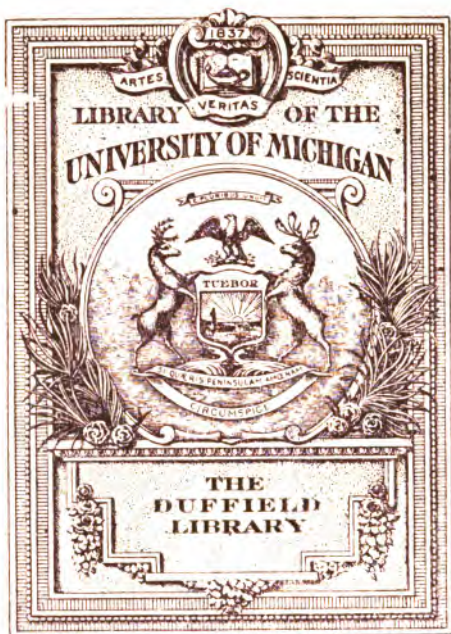
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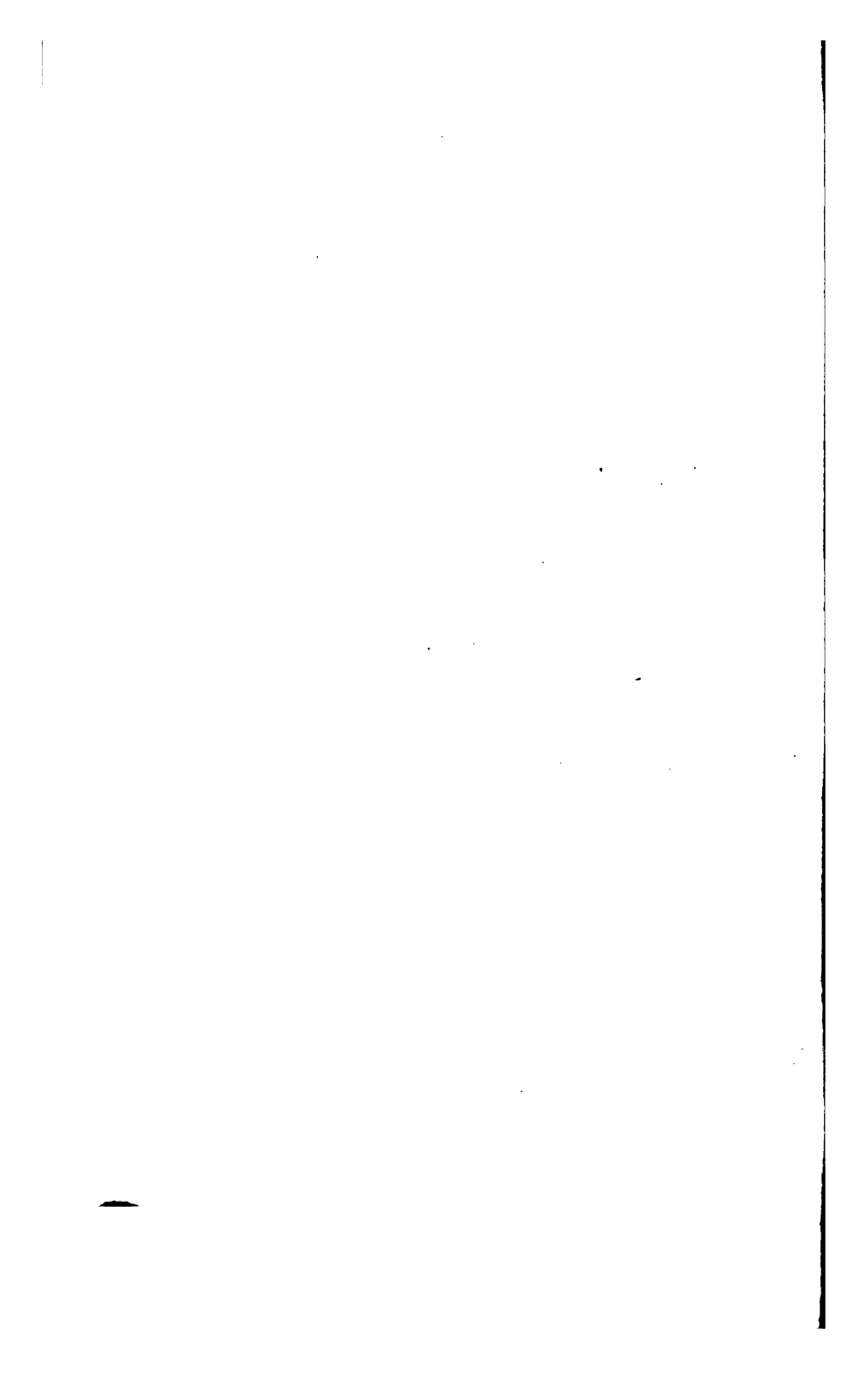
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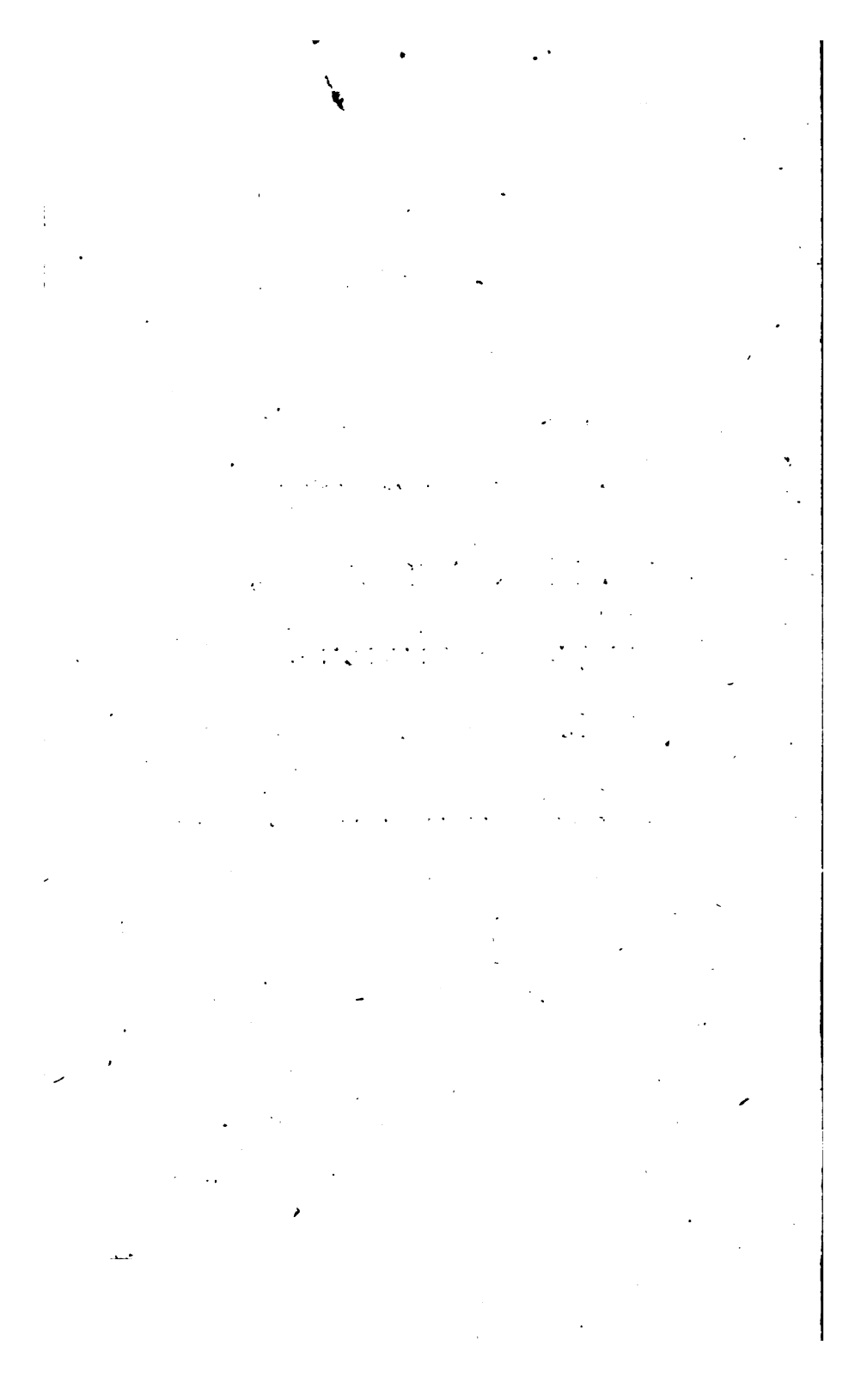


Ms. Sophia Clarke

MR. FLINT'S SERMON,

AT THE ORDINATION OF

MR. EVEREST.



A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

WINDHAM, November 22, 1815.

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Rev. CORNELIUS B. EVEREST.

By **ABEL FLINT,**

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN HARTFORD.

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A SERMON.

JOHN XXI. 16.

— *Feed my Sheep.*

THE time when this direction was given to Peter, and the circumstances attending it, stamp upon it a peculiar importance. To promote the glory of God, and to render the salvation of sinners consistent with the adorable perfections of Jehovah, the divine Redeemer had already suffered and died; and having continued under the power of death the appointed time, he had risen from the sepulchre, "triumphing over death, and him who had the power of death." The mediatorial work, which this glorious Saviour had undertaken, pursuant to the covenant of redemption, being now accomplished, so far as it was to be completed by his continuance on earth in a bodily form, the once suffering but now triumphant Jesus was about to ascend to his native heaven, there to finish his work as a Saviour.

At the time when he uttered the words of the text, the risen Jesus was with his disciples, at the sea of Tiberias. At his command, they cast their net into the sea, and having drawn it to land, full of great fishes, they sat down to eat with their beloved master. "When they had dined," Jesus ad-

dressed himself particularly to Peter, and said to him, three times, in quick succession, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Thrice had Peter denied his Lord; and now Christ gives him an opportunity, in some measure, to repair his fault, by a triple confession.

The scene was interesting, and calculated to make a deep impression, not only on the mind of Peter, but also on the minds of the other disciples. Each time that the question was asked, the affectionate disciple replied to his master, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He appealed without hesitation to the infinite knowledge of the son of God, because conscious to himself of the sincerity of his esteem. But by attending to the original, we shall find Peter's answers evince, that he had lost that self-confidence, which made him declare, a short time before, he would die with Christ, rather than deny him. A recollection of his departure from this solemn asseveration, and of the bitter regret which he consequently suffered, made him cautious what language he used.

In two of the three questions, our Lord made use of a word which signifies to *love ardently and supremely*. Peter, in his replies, substituted a word signifying *to regard, to feel friendship for another*. As if Jesus had said, "Peter, dost thou love me ardently and supremely?" To which he answers, "Lord, I feel an affection for thee, I do esteem thee, but dare, at present, say no more."*

To each of the answers of this once self-confident but now humble disciple, his divine master replies by giving him a command. To the first he says, "Feed my lambs." To the other two, "Feed my sheep." I have made choice of the second of these precepts, in preference to either of the others, as

* See Adam Clark's Commentary.

the foundation of my present discourse, because, in the original, the word translated *feed* is different, in this place, from the word used in the other two verses.

There was a propriety in our Lord's varying the expression, that he might convey to Peter a more perfect idea of the duty to which he called him by the command. The language is figurative, and borrowed from the care which shepherds exercise over their flocks. In allusion to this, the great Shepherd enjoins upon Peter, in the first place, to feed his lambs, and secondly, not only to feed his sheep, but to discharge towards them all the duties of a good and faithful shepherd, which is the meaning of the word, used in the verse containing the text.

The injunction under consideration, though addressed primarily to Peter, was not intended for him alone. It conveys a truth applicable at the present time as well as then, and also points out a duty binding on all those who are called to act as spiritual pastors, in subordination to the great shepherd. This is evident from many passages of scripture, particularly from an exhortation contained in the first epistle of Peter. This distinguished apostle in addressing elders, uses language very similar to that contained in the text; and in adopting this language, he doubtless had reference to the command which his master had, reiteratedly, given to him. "The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, Feed the flock of God, which is among you."

The words before us are adapted to the important and interesting occasion, on which we are now met in the sanctuary of the Lord; and in discoursing upon them, it is proposed,

I. To make some remarks upon this truth, ob-

viously suggested by them, That Christ is the Shepherd of his people.

II. To consider the duty of Christian ministers, so far as it is pointed out by the phrase, "Feed my sheep."

III. To apply the subject.

I. I am to remark upon this truth, obviously suggested by the text, Christ is the Shepherd of his people.

In the holy volume, the divine Redeemer is frequently represented under the character of a Shepherd; and under this interesting title, he speaks of himself sundry times, particularly in the tenth chapter of John. But in what respects may this title be applied to our glorious Lord?

1. He finds his people in their wanderings, and brings them into his fold.

In their natural state, all mankind are disposed to wander in the devious ways of sin. They depart from God, the only source of good, and stray from those paths, which alone can conduct them to happiness. Like sheep without a guide, they wander into the wilderness, and expose themselves continually to danger. Such is the native enmity of the human heart to the ever blessed Jehovah, that men would continue to stray away through life, and finally fall into the pit of destruction, did not Christ, by his Spirit, bring a part of them to see their danger, and gently lead them in the paths of righteousness. His language to his people is, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

In tender pity and compassion to those who, from eternity, were ordained to be of his flock, this tender and gracious Shepherd goes in pursuit of them;

“ he finds them, and leads them in safety to a place
 “ of rest, where every thing necessary is provided
 “ for them.”

2. The tenderness and love of Christ, as the good Shepherd, are manifested, not only in bringing sinners into his fold, in the first instance, but in still watching over and guiding them, to prevent their again wandering from him, and becoming lost.

“ I am the good Shepherd,” said he to his primitive disciples, “ and know my sheep, and am known of mine.” Again, “ He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth them forth, he goeth before them, and they follow him, for they know his voice.” The same gracious Shepherd also says, “ I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish ; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.”

In this figurative language is conveyed an important truth in the great scheme of salvation, that those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and united to Christ by faith, will not be suffered to perish. To those who have been renewed by his Spirit, the divine Redeemer will communicate persevering grace. He may suffer them to depart from him for a time, to teach them humility ; and to impress on them a becoming sense of their entire dependence on him ; but in the end he will bring them back from their wanderings. “ Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out : as a Shepherd seeketh out his flock, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places, where they have been scattered in the dark and cloudy day. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away. I will bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick.”

How merciful does the great Shepherd of Israel appear, in these tender expressions of love to his

flock ! And what an encouraging consideration is this to the Christian, in seasons of darkness and gloom ! In such seasons, let him look to his gracious Redeemer, and be assured that he will soon experience renewed tokens of divine love and grace.

3. Christ Jesus may be considered as the Shepherd of his people, as he imparts to them that nourishment which they need.

“ The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He prepareth a table before me ; he anointeth my head with oil ; my cup runneth over.” “ I will feed them,” said Jehovah, by his prophet Ezekiel, “ I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israël shall their fold be.” Under these lively images, is represented the spiritual nourishment, with which the kind and compassionate Redeemer supplies his people.

He will support and comfort those who were originally chosen as his, and whom he has once brought into his fold. In a spiritual sense, he gives them his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink. “ Far different is their portion from that of men of the world. The latter is only vanity and vexation of spirit. The former is substantial. It comprises all the blessings of the new covenant ;—the justifications of their persons,—the renovation of their hearts,—an adoption into the family of God,—assurance of his love,—peace of conscience,—joy in the Holy Ghost.” Moreover, the same gracious Redeemer feeds his people by his word and ordinances ; by all the institutions of religion ; and especially by imparting to them the influences of his Spirit. He gives them a right to all the blessings purchased by his atoning sufferings.

and death ; and distributes those blessings as their necessities require.

Such, O Christian, such is thy privilege. Cultivate a deep sense of thy dependence on thy Saviour, and repair to him to supply all thy spiritual wants. Withdraw thy affections from earthly things, and centre them on those spiritual and divine objects, which only can satisfy the desires of an immortal soul.

4. As a good Shepherd, Christ protects, guards, and defends his flock.

This all sufficient Saviour is continually watchful for the safety of his chosen people ;—to support them under their trials ;—to comfort them under their afflictions ;—to succor them in temptation ;—to protect them in danger ;—and to defend them against their spiritual enemies, which are numerous and powerful. The Christian has to combat with the corruptions of his own heart. He has to struggle against the temptations of an ensnaring world. He has to fight against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness. But let him not despond. In the end he shall come off victorious. His heavenly leader “ gives power to the faint ; and to them that have no might, he increases strength.” When, at any time, they stumble and fall, he comes to their relief, lifts up the hands which hang down, and strengthens the feeble knees. Thus will the divine Immanuel be with his people through life ; nor in death will he forsake them. In that trying season he will be with them ; his rod and his staff will comfort them. Having supported them by his presence in death, he will receive them into mansions of bliss, to dwell with him in glory forever. Such are the cheering, animating prospects presented to the view of true Christians,—of them who belong to the fold of Jesus.

5. It may be further observed, under this head, that the great Shepherd exercises his care over his flock, in part at least, through the instrumentality of his ministring servants, whom he sends forth to act under his superintendancy, and in obedience to his commands.

These under shepherds derive from Christ all their authority, and all their ability to be useful to others. Without him, indeed, they can do nothing ; but he is pleased to employ them, and under his direction they are made to promote the good of his flock. He has promised to be with them ; and if they look to him for instruction in duty, and for grace to enable them to be faithful, they will be so far serviceable as to evince his love to his people. But this branch of the subject will be best illustrated under the next general head of discourse.

Having thus considered the truth suggested in the text, that Christ is the Shepherd of his people, we are,

II. To remark upon the duty enjoined in the command given to Peter, " Feed my sheep."

This injunction, as has been already observed, was not given to that disciple only. It is a command binding on all who are separated to the work of the ministry. As under shepherd, they are to feed the flock of the great Shepherd. This they are to do,

1. By giving their hearers suitable instruction.

As necessary as food is for the sustenance of the body, so necessary is knowledge for the spiritual nourishment of the soul. " That the soul be without knowledge is not good." This observation of king Solomon is particularly true, with regard to that spiritual knowledge, which the divine teacher would have imparted to his people, by his ministers.

They cannot be said to feed his flock, without instructing them in the things appertaining to the kingdom of God. To this end, it is certainly necessary that they should be "apt to teach." To be duly fitted for their important office, they should be "Scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven;" having their minds stored with all that knowledge, which appertains particularly to true religion. And they ought also to be men possessed of talents adapted to communicate to others that information, with which, by diligent study, and a careful improvement of all opportunities afforded them, they may have replenished their own minds.

To comply with the injunction in our text, it is incumbent on those who attempt to preach the gospel, not to shun to declare the whole counsel of God, as they shall have opportunity. It would be presumptuous for me to say, positively, what the whole counsel of God is, even if the time allotted to my discourse permitted. On this subject there is a diversity of opinions; and each one, called to the work of the ministry, must determine for himself, from a candid, faithful, and prayerful study of that inspired volume, which is the great standard of truth, remembering that to his own master he stands or falls. I feel it to be my duty, however, on this occasion, to observe, that I fully believe, no one can feed Christ's sheep, who does not inculcate, with great precision and plainness, the system of doctrines which, by way of distinction, are called the doctrines of grace; and who does not urge the duties connected with that system.

These were the doctrinal sentiments of those distinguished reformers, through whose instrumentality, the darkness of popery was dissipated; and a glorious light diffused over a large portion of Christendom. This system is to be found, with little va-

riation, in the creeds and confessions of most protestant nations ; although many, who have assented to those formularies, contradict their most essential articles, in their public ministrations. It was, that they might quietly profess these doctrines, that our pious ancestors left the land of their fathers' sepulchres, and fled to a howling wilderness. The great body of the New-England churches, and particularly the congregational churches in this state, almost without exception, still believe the same system ; and wherever it has been duly preached, God has borne abundant testimony to its truth.

Permit me, in this place, my brethren, to bear witness against an idea, strenuously inculcated by the modern apostles of liberality, that it is of no consequence what a man's particular opinions are on religious subjects, provided he gives a general assent to the divine inspiration of the scriptures, and leads what is called a good moral life. This sentiment sanctions, at once, all the errors and heresies, all the contradictory and absurd notions, which have obtained in the world ;—removes the distinction between truth and falsehood ;—virtually destroys the hopes of man ;—and robs God of his glory. Let us remember that, as the great Father of lights has given us a revelation, in which truth and duty are plainly taught, we are as guilty for rejecting the one, as for not observing the other.—On this subject, the words of the inspired apostle Jude merit our attention : “ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to exhort you, that ye should contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation ; ungodly men, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus

Christ. But ye, beloved, build up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life."

2. Under the idea of feeding the flock of Christ, is included, not only preaching the word to them, in public on the Lord's day, but also giving them instruction at other times, in a more private manner, in social meetings, and in the family circle.

The apostle Paul, in his address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, observes, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house." In imitation of his example, evangelical ministers will carefully improve every opportunity to communicate religious knowledge. They will endeavour to render their pastoral visits profitable; and to this end, will enquire into the different circumstances of those whom they visit, that they may suitably adapt their instructions.— They will also notice the various dispensations of divine Providence, among their people, both merciful and afflictive, and suggest from them such reflections as may be useful to those who experience mercies, or suffer afflictions.

3. That those who sustain the pastoral office may observe the command given to Peter, and through that apostle to them, it is necessary, not only that they instruct their hearers, publicly and privately, as they may have opportunity, in the doctrines and duties of religion, but also that they watch over them; which is another idea included in feeding the flock of Christ, according to the original word used by our Lord.

The direction of Peter is, "Feed the flock of God; taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, and of a ready mind." A trusty shep-

herd feels it his duty to watch over his flock ;—to keep them from wandering ;—to guard them from danger, as far as he is able ;—and to do every thing in his power for their good. So the spiritual pastor, if faithful to his divine Lord, will watch over the flock committed to his care. When he finds any of them wandering into the devious paths of error, as regards either faith or practice, he will, with tenderness and prudence, warn them of their danger ; counsel them solicitously to retrace their steps ; and beseech them affectionately to return to the good old paths.

He will make himself acquainted with their situation from time to time, that he may devise means to be useful to them ; and, as his divine master “ went about doing good,” so he will seek opportunities to benefit those of whom he has the charge ; and assiduously endeavor, in every possible way, to promote their spiritual welfare. He will visit them under their afflictions, and strive to impart to them the consolations of the gospel. And not only at such times, but on other occasions, will pray with them ; and in all his addresses to the throne of grace, whether in the closet, in the family, or in the sanctuary, the affectionate pastor will remember the flock, of which he has the oversight, and earnestly commend them to the gracious care and protection of the great Shepherd.

4. The regular administration of Christian ordinances, and of the discipline of the church, forms another part of pastoral duty.

The stewards of the mysteries of Christ are to dispense the seals of the covenant ; and to admit all who are duly qualified to a participation of the special ordinances appointed by the great head of the church. As watchmen over the flock, they are, also, to discipline offenders, that they may be reclaim-

ed, and others deterred from similar offences ; and they are to cut off the uncorrigible, that a stumbling block may not be cast in the way of any, and that the cause of truth and righteousness may not be reproached.

5. I will mention but one more particular, under this general head of discourse. It was remarked, when illustrating the truth suggested in the text, that the great Shepherd seeks those who are ordained to be of his flock, and brings them into his fold. In effecting this, he makes use of the labors of his servants.

After his resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ commanded his apostles to go forth, and preach the gospel to every creature ; and promised to be with them to the end of the world.— This promise was not made exclusively to those to whom it was first addressed ; but it extends to their successors in the ministry. They are made instrumental, not only of feeding the sheep already within the fold, but also of gathering in others. The exalted Redeemer accompanies, with his Spirit, the public preaching of his word, and the more private instructions given by those who act as his ambassadors ; and blesses these means to the awakening, convincing, and converting of sinners.

All, therefore, who go forth in his name, feel it incumbent upon them to call sinners to repentance ; and when they find any weary and heavy laden, with a sense of sin and guilt, to invite them to come to him and find rest. In his name, they beseech sinners to become reconciled to God. This they do at all times ; but in a day of God's gracious visitation, by the outpouring of his Spirit, they are more abundant in labors, that they may instrumentally awaken sinners, and lead anxious enquirers to the only place of safety. At such seasons, they do

not think it sufficient barely to perform the stated ministrations of the sanctuary, on the Sabbath, but in addition to these, they meet with those who are disposed to attend, at other times for social conference, prayer, and instruction in the things of religion. They are careful, however, to arrogate nothing to themselves; and with whatever success their labours may be crowned, and with whatever solicitude their counsel may be sought, they ascribe all the glory to him, whose instruments they are, saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

Further, Christian ministers, who have at heart the cause of the great Redeemer, will unite with their brethren, as they shall have opportunity, in devising and executing plans for the building up of Zion. They will exert themselves to aid Missionary and Bible Societies, and all institutions, whose object is to disseminate religious knowledge, and to promote the spiritual welfare of mankind. And believing the glorious promises, in the sacred scriptures, respecting the universal extension of Christ's spiritual kingdom, they will strenuously endeavor, by their prayers and labors, to help forward the happy period, when all shall bow to the sceptre of Jesus, and own him as their Lord and King.

III. An Application of the subject will close the present discourse.

1. A view of the command of the risen Jesus to Peter, on which we have now been meditating, will lead my brethren in the ministry, and especially my young brother, who is this day to be set apart to that work, to say, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Brethren, our sufficiency is not of ourselves, but

of the Lord, who has said, "My grace is sufficient for you." Each one of us may therefore exclaim, "When I am weak, then am I strong." We go not forth in our own strength, but relying on him who has declared, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." Trusting in this promise, let us endeavour faithfully and zealously to perform the work to which we are called,—to feed the flock of Christ,—to instruct them, as we may have opportunity, and this not only in public, but in social meeting, and from house to house ;—to watch over them ;—to counsel and warn them ;—to comfort them, and pray with and for them ;—to administer the sealing ordinances, and the discipline of the gospel ;—to exhort sinners to become reconciled to God ;—to lead enquiring souls in the paths of truth and righteousness ;—and to do all in our power to advance the cause of our glorious Head.

Your duty, beloved brother in the Lord, has been pointed out, in part, in this discourse ; and you are soon to receive a solemn charge, in which it will be further explained. Bear with me, however, while I add a few words, as an expression of my affectionate regard for you, and of my sincere wish that you may be happy and useful in this place. To you, dear Sir, this is a peculiarly interesting time. The work to which you are this day to be consecrated is arduous ; the office into which you are about to be inducted is important. With a punctual performance of this arduous work,—with a regular discharge of the duties of this important office, is connected not only your own happiness, but, in all probability, the happiness of many of these people, who, from this day, will look up to you as their spiritual guide. God grant that numbers may look up to you as their spiritual father ! For this church and society, you cannot but feel a most tender solicitude, as you are

now to take the oversight of them in the Lord ; and they must seem particularly near to you, from the circumstance that your labors among them appear to have been blessed, and the influences of the Spirit of God to have attended your efforts to do them good. Relying on renewed visitations of the same Spirit, and on the gracious promise of your divine Lord, take them under your pastoral charge. As a faithful shepherd, feed this flock. Nourish them with sound doctrine ; administer to them spiritual consolation, according to their necessities ; impart to them needed counsel and warning ; bear them on your heart in prayer to God ; and perform towards them all the duties of the pastoral office. Remembering the injunction of the chief Shepherd, " Feed my lambs," be particularly attentive to the youth of your charge. Take much pains to give them instruction suited to their years and capacities ; and convince them by the gentleness, the affection, the tenderness of your deportment, that your counsel to them proceeds from an anxious solicitude for their everlasting good. Look well, beloved brother, to the state of your own soul ; and be careful that you do not mistake, for personal holiness, that attention which you will be necessarily called to pay to the truths of the gospel, and to the external institutions of religion. To take the lead in the public services of the sanctuary, is one thing. To feel the influence of divine truth on our own hearts, and experimentally to know that grace, which we are called to preach to our fellow men, is another thing. In you, let them be found united. In a word, be, in all respects, " an able minister of the new testament," and having " turned many to righteousness," may you " shine as the stars, for ever and ever."

2. The subject may be applied not only to ministers, but to their people.

It is the duty of all to listen to the instruction which the divine teacher gives them by those whom he sends forth as his heralds. Therefore, my hearers, "remember them which have the rule over you, who speak unto you the word of God." Believe the doctrines which they preach; attend to the counsel which they give; and observe the duties which they inculcate, so far as they speak according to the law and to the testimony. Impressed with a becoming sense of the arduousness of their work, and the importance of their fidelity for your good, pray for them, that they may be instrumental of gathering many into the fold of Christ, and that they may faithfully feed his sheep.

Those of you, who are members of this church and society, will permit me to congratulate you on the interesting transactions of this day. You are about to receive an ascension gift from him, who is head over all things to the church. May it prove a real blessing to you and your families! For your welfare, I feel a deep concern. This is the place of my nativity;—the place where the early part of my life was spent; and where still reside many people, whom I remember either as the friends of my parents, or as the associates of my youth. The sacred desk, from which I address you, leads back my imagination to the period when, in company with numbers who are here present, and with many more who are now in the great congregation of the dead, I was accustomed to come to this sanctuary, on the holy day of rest, and receive instruction from a venerable servant of Christ,* who, for upwards of fifty years, preached the everlasting gospel, and dispensed the ordinances and discipline of Christ's house in this place; and who is now, as we may

* The Rev. Stephen White was pastor of the first church in Windham, fifty-four years.

believe, enjoying the rewards of a faithful servant, in the beatific presence of his divine master. Since his decease, you have amicably called and settled two other ministers, but it was ordered in Providence, that they should not spend their lives with you. After labouring here, the one* about ten, and the other† about five years, they were dismissed from their pastoral connection with you, and are employed in other parts of the vineyard of the Lord.

The prospect now afforded is pleasing. With great unanimity, you have called one who is this day to be set over you in the Lord. Receive him as an ambassador for Christ; attend to him as such; remember him in all your prayers; and while he ministers to you in spiritual things, give him a competent, a generous support. "Behold, now is an accepted time, now is a day of salvation." God has been graciously pleased, of late, to pour out his Spirit here, and call up the attention of numbers to the things of their everlasting peace. "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; and call upon him, while he is near." Improve the precious season; and may none of you, hereafter, have occasion to take up the mournful lamentation and say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

"To God and the word of his grace I commend you." May you long enjoy the labors of your pastor elect; and when you shall have finished your earthly course, may he and you together partake of that inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading.

3. Lastly, We infer from the truth suggested in the text, the happiness of belonging to the fold of Christ.

* Rev. Elijah Waterman, now pastor of a church in Bridgeport. †Rev. William Andrews, now pastor of the first church in Danbury.

The good Shepherd will watch over and guide his flock, to prevent their wandering from him and becoming lost ;—he will feed, comfort, and support them ;—he will guard, protect, and defend them ;—he will be with them through life ;—he will cheer them in death ;—he will be their portion forever.

Are any of you, my hearers, indulging a hope that you are of this happy number ? Be thankful to him who hath made you to differ from others, and from what you yourselves once were. Give praise to him who found you in your wandering state, and brought you to himself. Realize your continual dependence on him for spiritual nourishment ;—look to him for a supply of all your wants ; endeavor to “ walk worthy of him who, from the beginning, chose you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth ;”—and may he comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Perhaps there are some in this assembly who, if they are faithful to themselves, must own that they are not of the flock of Christ. What shall I say to them ? “ There yet is room ” in his fold. No longer then stray away from duty and happiness. Be sensible of your wretched situation ; and listen to the kind, inviting voice of him, who calls you to come to him for rest and peace. Delay not until to-morrow ; but, to-day, while it is called to-day, hear his voice, turn to him, and live.

AMEN.

C H A R G E

TO THE PASTOR, BY

MOSES C. WELCH, D. D.

THE Lord Jesus Christ is prince of peace, king of Zion, and the great head of the church. He is the stone laid in Zion for a foundation, the chief corner stone of the building. He hath appointed the ordinances, and given all the regulations for his family on earth. He hath instituted the officers, and given all the means of instruction for his mystical body. When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edefying of the body of Christ ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The mode of induction to office, and all the authority committed to his ministering servants, are from him who is set as *king on the holy hill of Zion*.

One has been regularly called to minister in this part of the vineyard ; and having accepted the invitation, a council convened for the purpose hath, after satisfaction obtained that he is called of God, set him apart to the sacred office over this branch of the church of Christ.

While we rejoice with this flock in the smiles of heaven upon her, we proceed to the solemn charge to him who is now their pastor.

You are, my dear brother, constituted an officer in the kingdom of Christ, a bishop in the church of God. You are not a minister of Socrates, or Plato, but of Him who is *set as king on the holy hill of Zion*. You are not to imitate the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome, but you are to be a servant and follower of Jesus of Nazereth. We charge you, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the elect angels, and the church in glory, who are witnessing the solemnities of this day, that you take heed to the ministry you have received, and fulfil it. Is it not a solemn thought that the eternal THREE, the angels of heaven, and some of the church of the first born, are present to witness the interesting transactions of this day? Before all these we charge you, my brother, as an officer in the kingdom of Jesus, to magnify your office. We exhort you to diligence, fidelity, and perseverance in the sacred work to which you are now devoted.

You are to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. And you are to give them that food which is calculated to nourish them up unto everlasting life. And you must be assured that the food suited to this great and important object, is the sincere, the unadulterated milk of the word. *That* you will make your study, and the man of your counsel. Search the scriptures with an inquisitive mind after the truth, and a holy affection for their divine author, and you will draw from thence that instruction suited to every case.— You will there find the glorious character of JEHOVAH; and learn something of the wonderful perfection of his nature, as well as the incomprehensible mode of his existence. You will there find a revelation of one God in three distinct persons, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

You will learn, from the same fountain of truth, the character of man, fallen, depraved, and totally corrupted. You will find, also, the necessity of a complete change of the moral state of man—even that he must be born again, that he may be prepared to see the kingdom of God.

The sovereignty of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, doing his pleasure in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, makes a part of that system of truth with which we are to feed the church of God.

By the divine constitution, and the blessed promises of the covenant of grace, we find the believer secured from final apostacy.

The retributions of eternity in the salvation of penitent believers, and the eternal misery of such as die without repentance, come to us from the author of all truth.

In preaching these eternal and most interesting truths, you will feed the friends of God ; and by this you will be most likely to convert his enemies. Preach, therefore, the plain truths of the bible.—Declare all the counsel of God, that you may be pure from the blood of all men. In this day of abounding error endeavor to know the truth, and use every exertion to support it. Shrink not from a defence of the doctrines of the cross. Hold them dearer than life. While you avoid, on the one hand, a censorious, intolerant spirit, that anathematizes all whose opinions differ from your own ; you will, on the other hand, guard against an accommodating, smooth, temporizing course, which brings the gospel down to the feelings of the men of the world. Preach the gospel plainly. Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

The sealing ordinances of the gospel you will administer to subjects duly qualified, always making